

# The Dream of Beautiful Scooters

by Karah Stokes

1.

I walk through a grove of them in my dream.  
 All are old and lovely, patinated fenders curved  
 like dinosaur hipbones. None is rusted,  
 though I see silvery metal showing  
 through their ice cream-colored paint:  
 strawberry, lemon sorbet, milky aqua.  
 Lined up in a row, they wait for me to choose  
 one to ride away on.  
 The first are things to pedal, like kids' toys  
 or swan-painted paddleboats. Then I realize  
 what those gears on the handlebars mean.  
 One is three-wheeled, with a milk crate in back  
 for my groceries; others are larger, like mini Model T's.  
 We each choose one, maneuver past  
 the antique anti-theft by luck alone.  
 We are meant to have them.  
 Did I mention we're in Nice, or sunny Italy,  
 somewhere I've never seen?

2.

My husband's bumping into stuff  
 downstairs. Thieves or vandals would sound  
 more purposeful. It's the ADD  
 that's made his life hell, given him seven songs  
 so far, four books of poetry, and me.  
 Down in the sleeping street, the houses  
 look the way they looked a hundred years ago.  
 There's a clear star above that roof  
 where the sun will rise. Ours is the smallest on the street,  
 with ten-foot plaster walls, deep unpainted moldings,  
 and four of the prettiest mantelpieces I've ever seen.

I never thought I'd be here.  
 What killed my great-grandmother at forty  
 I keep at bay by one inexpensive pill a day.  
 What killed my kindest great-aunt takes more pills,  
 but they're cheap, and work for me so far.  
 I've found a man who's not afraid of me. He loves  
 my oddest ways, has made every quirk a sacrament.  
 Our jobs are solid. We can almost pay the bills.

3.

In that French grocery where I find the scooters, I buy  
 a baguette too beautiful to eat. The bike I take makes for  
 a fast getaway, cuts through the sudden ice (Ice?)  
 Like a hot knife. It's a turbocharged Zamboni.